

**WASHINGTON** – U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) released the following statement following U.S. Rep. Dennis Hastert’s (R-Ill.) announcement today of his planned retirement from the House in December:

“For more than 20 years, Denny served the people of his district and the entire state of Illinois with a type of leadership that Washington rarely sees,” Congressman Kirk said. “For nearly 10 years, the Coach was our speaker and we are certainly saddened that he has announced his last day on the floor. He led the Congress through one of the darkest moments of United States history on September 11 and helped secure millions of federal transportation dollars that Illinois needed badly – including invaluable expansion projects such as Metra’s STAR Line. While we will miss his presence in the Capitol, his legacy will not soon be forgotten.”

Rep. Hastert was the longest serving Republican speaker, leading the House from 1999 to 2007. He was first elected in 1986 and previously served in the Illinois House. Prior to entering public service, Rep. Hastert was a high school teacher and wrestling coach.